

LYNN
BOGUE
HUNT

*Clearing through the bush, the brute
bore down on the lad*

An African Hunting Tragedy

By W. S. CHADWICK

Illustrated by LYNN BOGUE HUNT

IN October, 1935, I went to live on the mountains of Melsetter, in the eastern part of Southern Rhodesia. A week later I read in a Dutch paper that Piet Snyman's 18-year-old son had been killed by an elephant the year before and that Snyman himself had hunted elephants for the Mozambique Company, in Portuguese East Africa, for more than twenty years.

So, with a view of ascertaining hunting conditions in Portuguese territory, I motored the eighty miles to the nearest official post of Spungabera, just across the border, and on the way back I turned aside to make Snyman's acquaintance.

Although not quite fifty years of age and in good physical shape, Piet will hunt no more elephants. His nerve is as good as at any time during his thirty years of hunting; but after the death of their son, his wife made him promise that he would give up professional hunting and never

follow another elephant. I thought I sometimes detected his regret for that promise during the two days in which he gave me material enough to fill a fat note-book, but I think he will keep his word. I propose to relate his last adventure first, although some of his earlier experiences are no less thrilling.

The story illustrates the endurance and courage demanded of the man who follows a rogue elephant and pits his hunting skill against the cunning of the beast. Since, like most South African Dutch pioneers, Piet is handier with a rifle than with camera or pen, he is unable to place on record experiences of great value and interest to the sportsman in Africa. But so vividly did he relate the facts that, after having spent twenty-five years in the bush myself, I had no difficulty in picking out the high lights in adventures with dangerous game which probably only the late Capt. F. C. Selous could parallel.

Piet's father trekked a thousand miles from the Union of South Africa to the Chingisa district by ox-wagon, nearly forty years ago. When the old man died, Piet took over his small farm as a young man. But markets were almost non-existent and pests numerous, and hunting was in the young fellow's blood. So he fixed up a contract with officials of the Mozambique Company to shoot elephants on a basis of 25 per cent of ivory, being permitted to shoot other game for his own benefit.

During twenty years he shot more than three hundred elephants and lived on his hunting and the produce of his farm. On many occasions he shook hands with King Death and came to believe himself a privileged acquaintance. He had barely commenced the season's operations in 1934 when an urgent message from the Portuguese officials informed him that an elephant had killed two native hunters in a district twenty-five miles farther east,

Why one of the most successful of elephant hunters gave up the sport

and asked him to go in pursuit at once.

Piet and his son, then accompanying his father for the second time, struck camp at once and started. With them went a full-blooded Zulu named Franz, an Angoni named Mbesa and their dogs, Streak and Prince, besides the local carriers.

For a week they followed the cold spoor of the rogue over a 200-mile area between the Sabi and Pungwe Rivers without sighting the brute. But all the time the sign was getting fresher, and one night they camped on a small stream, feeling confident they were not many miles behind the killer. Later they discovered that the big bull had, in fact,

The big bull saw the move and made after him, but the little terrier, Prince, hurled himself at the hind legs with futile gallantry. He was promptly joined in his assault by the lurcher, and although the pair could have made no effective bites the bull pivoted and struck another flailing blow at the puny aggressors. The delay was slight; but by the time he swept forward to the foot of the tree, Piet had joined his son and the Zulu thirty feet above the ground.

The elephant's head struck the bole with the force of a pile-driver, and as he drew back for a second attempt on the sturdy tree the dogs attacked again from

killed an old woman that afternoon as she gathered wild fruits in the bush. A native showed them the remains, with the remnants of her basket beside them. The bull had gone on after his unprovoked killing.

Then Piet grew anxious for his son's safety, realizing that they followed a beast with a grudge against all the human species. But young Hans would not accept his suggestion that he go back with the Zulu and leave his father to follow the killer. The old hunter's voice was very sad as he said to me nearly a year later: "That boy was not afraid of anything, mister, and he thought no elephant could beat me. I ought to have made him go back. It is my fault he is dead."

For another three days they followed the spoor, sometimes north and sometimes east, without catching sight of the



drunk that evening at a pan only fifteen miles ahead. But by then they were much closer than that.

During the night—Piet reckoned it was after midnight—they were roused from sleep by yells of "Náálovo! Boleka! (Elephant! Run!)" from Franz and Mbesa. At the same time the dogs barked savagely and the ground shook to the thud of heavy feet. As Piet and his son rolled out of their blankets and grabbed their rifles they heard a human scream and saw natives running in all directions.

About twenty yards away a huge elephant was stamping something into the earth beyond the native bivouac, but Piet did not stay to inquire what it was. Dashing to the foot of a big tree the Zulu had already climbed, he hoisted his young son up, and turned around to see the dogs barking in the face of the elephant in an attempt to halt the brute. He saw the great trunk strike a swinging blow at the big lurcher, Streak, and heard Franz call from the tree: "Climb, master! Quick! The elephant is mad!"

ALTHOUGH he knew the advice was good, Piet raised his rifle to get in a shot before taking it. At the same moment the elephant, having missed the active dogs, coiled his trunk again and hid the vulnerable chest. The bullet glanced off the massive shoulder of the beast, and Piet swung himself into the tree with no more loss of valuable time.

behind. At the same moment Piet sent down another bullet from his 404. Flinging up his trunk in a blast that sent the dogs flying for their lives, the bull turned and dashed down-wind to the north, following the trail by which he had arrived.

Piet would have descended at once, but Franz dissuaded him by saying: "Wait until day, master. This beast is not as others. He is very cunning and may come back."

Piet had seen enough to know what he was up against, as it was the first time an elephant had attacked a camp by night in his long experience. So he waited for dawn, and then found that one of the carriers who had been tardy in rising had been stamped to pulp. He also found broken camp furniture and calabashes among the scattered embers of his campfire and the bivouac fires, and that his second rifle had been broken where it lay beside his blankets. Yet he considered himself lucky that the damage was no greater and knew that the Zulu spoke probable truth when he said: "The elephant would have dug up the tree if the dogs had not worried him. They have surely earned much meat."

Next day they followed the trail and found the pan where the bull had drunk the night before, but he was again heading north toward the Pungwe River. Late that afternoon they reached a native village where the women were wailing, and learned that the beast they followed had

elephant, although the trail was fresh. Piet had hoped that one of his shots in the night would slow the brute up, but the pace at which the bull was moving showed that no serious damage had been done. Very often they had to follow through dense bush, and in such country the elephant easily outpaced them.

ON the fourth day the spoor was joined by that of a rhinoceros and went on parallel to it until both entered a patch of dense thorn-bush. This worried the hunter a lot, because he knew that elephants and rhinos do not generally fraternize, and the rhino is at once about the keenest-scented and worst-tempered beast that walks. If the rhino was still in the cover, it meant that he would probably charge unexpectedly, and if the elephant joined him the position would be perilous indeed. Since the patch extended for several miles, they could not afford time to scout the further side; so eventually they moved in with great care.

Suddenly the rhino charged with the rush of a locomotive, and though Piet and his son jumped aside successfully the gun-bearers were obliged to turn and run. The rhino was only a few yards behind Franz when the dogs shot between him and the Zulu and barked in his face. He pulled up abruptly, and before he could move again Piet fired from behind and sent a bullet through his ribs. He lurched and almost fell, but recovered

and half turned toward the hunters. That gave Piet's son a broadside shot, and the boy sent a bullet through his heart which brought him down.

At the same instant Franz shouted, "The elephant, master!"

They looked around to see the curved line of a great back shearing through the thorn-bush, about fifty yards away. The great bulk was moving almost silently, and Piet sent in a hasty bullet low down through the bush, hoping to strike a vital spot. A furious trumpet blast answered the shot, but the elephant increased his pace and was hidden by taller bush before either hunter could shoot again.

Leaving the rhino where it lay, they pushed on, but they camped at sunset without water and without another sight of the beast. The gun-bearers insisted that the bull knew he was hunted when he shared the cover with the rhino and that he had done so deliberately, expecting that the rhino would give him warning of the men's approach. Piet did not at first credit the elephant with such cunning, but before he had finished the trail he was willing to believe that and more. In the meantime, it was plain that the beast knew now that he was hunted and that he would be more difficult than ever to bring to bay.

BUT that bullet through the bush had found the bull's stomach, and late the following afternoon they discovered grim evidence that the wound had told on even his colossal strength. The natives had heard of the rogue's activities, and when a party of men coming south from the Pungwe found him at noon, lying beneath a great mimosa tree, they thought that he was dead, for an elephant seldom lies down except to die. Although jubilant at their find and believing he would never rise again, the natives approached with caution.

The foremost natives on each side had raised their assegais to throw when the black mound heaved into volcanic life. The men were on the run as the bull regained his feet, but with less than fifty yards' start they had no chance in the thick bush. His trunk hurled one man beneath the crushing mill of his feet as another dived beneath a belt of thorns. Two seconds later the bull crashed after him, and after stamping all life from the remains the beast went back to his first victim and very deliberately tore the corpse asunder. Then he headed north, apparently refreshed by his orgy of vengeance, and the survivors ran for their lives until they reached Piet's camp at sunset, on the only water in thirty miles.

Piet knew that the bull was feeling sick, as he must surely have scented the men and had apparently been willing to

let them pass until they approached him. He also realized that the quarry was still dangerous and strong enough to travel. But he went on next morning, hoping the beast would lie down again, and in that case he was resolved that it should indeed be for the last time.

Passing the mimosa clump where the bull had rested, they found sign of stomach-contents on the spoor and knew that a bullet had told. But the bull had gone on strongly, and in the next two days they covered forty miles without a glimpse of him. They had traveled no more than an hour on the third day when they saw him standing beside a small tree in fairly open forest. As they halted to decide what to do, for he was too far off for a sure shot, he moved away, and they saw that he limped badly. So they pressed on, believing that the end of the hunt was in sight, as it seemed impossible that he could travel much farther.

Within half a mile, however, they noted

said to me: "Mister, I felt then that I was following an elephant with a man's brain, and I think I was really afraid. I ought to have remembered this when I met him again."

Shortly after the spoor turned east the forest became sheer jungle. They were well within it when deep abdominal rumblings all around them told them they were in the midst of an unseen herd. The rogue had vanished, but as they had a view of only twenty yards or so he might well be very near. So Piet told Franz to release the dogs, and as they did so the plucky pair ran ahead.

Old Streak's deep growl was drowned in a mighty trumpet blast on one side as a big cow dashed out from the other. Seeing the danger to the terrier, Mbesa—always trying to outdo the Zulu, whose blood he shared, in deeds of recklessness—ran forward with a shout and flourished his assegai in the cow's face. She wheeled on him like a flash, and a big bull, emerging from cover on the other side of the trail, halted abruptly, apparently surprised at seeing humans.

Hans sent a bullet to the bull's brain as Piet brought down the cow which threatened Mbesa. But as Piet was obliged to fire at the hind quarters, his bullet struck the root of the tail and paralyzed her haunches. She was but ten paces from him, he said, and had stretched out her trunk to seize the native when her hind quarters collapsed. Before she could stiffen her hind legs in an effort to lift them, Piet had dashed around to her side and sent a second shot to her brain.

ONLY Piet's quick shot had saved the reckless Mbesa that morning, but when he censured the boy for his folly the Angoni said with a grin that he was afraid the terrier would be killed. He added that he wanted to show Franz that the Angoni were still Zulus, even though they had left their country long ago. The shots had sent the herd through the bush in headlong flight, and the rogue had gone with them. The gun-bearers suggested that he would go with the herd until he was chased out by a stronger bull; so they followed the spoor, after leaving four carriers to chop out the tusks of the dead beasts.

Five miles from that cover they found sign of an elephant fight and learned that the rogue had turned aside again; so they took the solitary spoor, which this time went south. Toward sunset they approached a dense patch of bush only a few hundred yards wide. After circling this, Franz reported that no spoor left the opposite side. He also said, "There is fresh blood too, master, and I think he was hurt again in the fight with the other elephants."

Piet concluded (*Continued on page 73*)

Next Month

THEY DON'T FLY RIGHT

By MUSE DAVIS. Quail shooters the country over will agree.

HIT BY A RATTLER

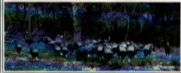
By Dr. CLARENCE H. MAGDONALD. A true story packing a thrill you'll never forget.

GRIZZLY FOR BREAKFAST

By STEVE ARCHER. It is seldom that a man hunts a grizzly bear for food.

FLAVORED ON THE HOOF

By HART STILWELL. No matter when your Thanksgiving Day comes, here is your turkey hunt.



the curious fact that they followed a double trail, one going north and one coming south. A few moments later the fresh spoor turned east, and soon afterward they heard the stomach-rumbles of an elephant herd. Then Franz explained that the bull had turned back on his tracks because he had smelled the herd and was leading the hunters to it to lose his own trail in that of the others.

Incredible as such cleverness seemed, there was no other explanation, and Piet had to accept it. When relating this, he

THE CROW MAN

(Continued from page 19)

exhausted, and only then did the flight turn away.

Well, I never kissed the Blarney stone, but when Lady Luck smacks me that hard with an idea I take the hint. From there on it was just a case of experimenting with gadgets which would shake a crow the same way, and through a machinist friend of mine the Gibble-Whistler Crow Enticer was evolved.

The drawings accompanying this article should enable any crow shooter to turn out this enticer (No. 1) with ordinary metal-working tools. The upright pipe (A) is a piece of tubing 38 inches long and 1 1/4 inches in diameter. Through this pipe is a piece of steel wire (B) 3/4 inch in diameter and 33 inches long. At the upper end of this piece of wire are soldered two pieces of 3/16-inch steel wire 9 inches long (C).



Press the pedal, and the wings flap

On the ends of each of these two pieces of steel wire (C), battery clips are soldered (D).

The platform (E) on which the crow is strapped is 2 1/2 inches above the end of the tube (A). Copper wire is wound around the uprights (F) and around the dead crow to hold him firmly in place. At the bottom of the tube (A) two slits are cut, opposite each other (G). These slits (G) are cut with a back-saw and extend up the tube 4 inches.

Then a piece of flat steel (H) 2 inches long, 3/8 inch wide and 3/16 inch thick is clamped to the bottom of the steel wire (B). A wooden handle (K) is fastened on one side of the piece of steel to facilitate operation. A pull-string of about 3/8-inch diameter and 9 inches long (L) is hooked to the piece of flat steel (H), stretched up the main tube (A), and hooked in a hole at the point where sufficient tension of the spring will snap up the handle when pulled down. This spring is similar to those used on screen doors.

After wiring the crow to the platform and strapping the battery clips on each wing (K), all you do is press down on the handle (K), and his wings will be pulled down. Upon releasing the handle they will fly up again.

Another type I call enticer No. 2. I have found it effective and more easily constructed.

Cut a piece of broom handle (A) 32 inches long and taper it to a point at the base. On the other end securely clamp the small end of a large coil spring (B), such as is used in automobile seats. On the large end of this spring fasten a flat piece of

heavy sheet metal about 3 inches square (D). Turn up two opposite edges 1/2 inch (C) and drill two 3/16-inch holes (E) in each turned-up edge, about 2 inches apart. Through these holes copper wire can be run around the dead crow, clamping him firmly in place. Run wires around only his body, leaving the wings free.

To operate, stick the pointed end in the ground and then, by jerking the stick sharply—backward, forward and sidewise—the crow will flap around. The success of this type of enticer is dependent almost entirely upon the resiliency of the spring. Unless the proper spring is found, No. 1 is the better.

Here are a few hints that will help you. Wear brown clothing, and if hand-shaking a crow expose only your arm and wear dark-colored gloves. I prefer No. 6 chilled shot in heavy loads. Listen to the different types of caws. Try to imitate them with your call. Learn the habits of the crows in your community. Don't park your car too close to the blind. Don't have too many companions. The more men, the more movement. Don't let the sun shine on your gun barrel.

If we are going to have more game, we must have fewer crows. More power to you as you enjoy one of the finest sports in the world!

AN AFRICAN HUNTING TRAGEDY

(Continued from page 36)

that he must either be dead or very weak, as they had approached down-wind and must have given him their scent, despite which he had not shown himself. So, releasing the dogs, the men forced their way cautiously into the thick bush. They had followed his trail for some distance through the tangle when the dogs ahead started snarling and growling, and almost simultaneously a yelp was followed by the appearance of the rogue's head above the bush. It was evident that one dog had gone too close, and the line of men halted. At the same time the head lurched forward and was completely hidden behind a mimosa trunk, leaving only patches of the body visible through the bush.

Hans had advanced some distance to the left of his father, while the gun-bearers kept the line a little beyond him. Piet had arranged this so that in case the beast moved they might both shoot without danger of hitting each other. For several moments they remained motionless, hoping that the bull would move on again and expose his head; but although they could still hear the deep growls of Strak, the elephant remained motionless.

Piet knew well enough that it is dangerous to fire "into the brown" at an elephant, and he could locate no vital spot. But the sun was going down, and he was anxious to end the long hunt. Besides which, he really thought the bull was too far gone to be dangerous. So, in the hope of either dropping him where he stood or making him move forward, so that his son could finish the business, Piet fired at a patch of black hide just visible through the bush.

Instantly the elephant trumpeted once and tore forward. At the same time he must have caught sight of Hans raising his rifle and, cleaving through the bush which hampered the men, he bore down on the lad. The young fellow had little chance for a shot except from the front, and he did not even take that. With a shout of fear he turned with the gun-bearers to run, but before he had moved more than a few yards the elephant lifted him in his trunk high into the air.

Piet fired as the brute dashed his victim down, and the bullet found the brain. But



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the shot came too late, and when the father tore like a madman through the bush he found his son crushed and dead beneath the three-ton bulk of the elephant they had followed for hundreds of miles. Though he knew it was useless, Piet and the natives cut poles and with desperate strength levered the great carcass off the body of his son. Then, in the half light, he carried the crushed form out of the bush and camped beside it that night in open forest. The following day they carried the body to a native village thirty miles away and there buried it temporarily, under guard of the Zulu.

Later it was removed to the farm. Since that day Piet Snyman has not hunted. With his wife's consent I feel sure he never will, for when I suggested that he might guide a party she said to me: "No, sir! Piet has shot many elephants and has not been hurt; but one day the beasts take revenge. God has taken my son as a warning to him, and if he goes again another elephant possessed of a devil like that one may get him too. He shall stay on the farm!"

And with sad eyes Piet Snyman assured her that he would keep the promise he had given her. But the gleam in his eyes as he related other stories of past hunts made me wonder how much the keeping of that promise will cost him.

